

# PROFILE

## Why I Give

Like so many Canadians, my wife Helen and I were moved watching Terry Fox on his Marathon of Hope and heartbroken when he passed away. That a young man ran halfway across a country as vast as Canada on one leg was extraordinary. We were inspired and began a long commitment to The Terry Fox Run and to funding cancer research. We ran, made personal donations, and encouraged our friends and family to do the same. 2020 marks the 40th anniversary of Terry's Marathon of Hope, and I'm proud to share how this young man became my motivation for supporting a cause I care about.

I've lived in Richmond, British Columbia since 1967. It's where Helen and I made a home, raised our son and took part in our first Terry Fox Run. Later, it was where we first felt personally impacted by cancer.

Helen was a wonderful caregiver and began a career in nursing at BC Children's Hospital, and later at the hospital in Richmond when it opened in 1966. In fact, she was the youngest head nurse in BC at the time. I took on a career in the not-for-profit sector and truly believed that charitable giving could improve our communities and even the world.

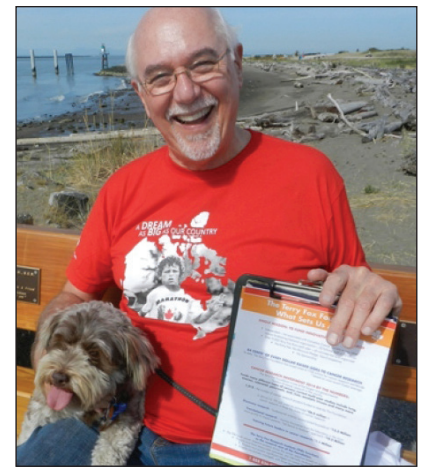
We were fortunate to spend many years supporting others with our contributions to The Terry Fox Foundation. In 1999, it was our turn to be supported. Helen was diagnosed with lymphoma, and so began our 12-year journey with cancer. Like many people facing a life-threatening illness, we wanted all the information we could get. Through our own research and conversations with Helen's doctors, we

quickly learned how complicated and unpredictable cancer is. The number of treatment options were limited, and for many cancer types, there was a 'one size fits all' approach. After being treated for lymphoma, Helen underwent two operations for breast cancer and then melanoma of the eye which metastasized to her liver, which we knew was very bad.

Helen passed away seven years ago. She died in the palliative care facility she had helped set up at Richmond Hospital where she worked as Director of Acute Care Nursing prior to retirement. We were married for 49 years and loved each other deeply. I know that her final 12 years were extended and made more full because of the advances made in cancer research. Advances that would not have been possible without committed donors who support people they'll never meet.

Just like Terry Fox, my wife's chance of surviving cancer would have been better if she were being treated today instead of twenty years ago. Terry once said, "even if I don't make it, it's got to keep going without me." I believe that the future for cancer patients is made better because of what we learned from people like Helen, who were treated before them. It certainly was for me.

Four years ago, I was diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancer. After two successful operations, I can now say I am a cancer survivor. I know there were people with the same cancer who came before me and who were not as fortunate. I want to keep that momentum alive so that people being diagnosed in the future have the best



**John Hopkins**

Terry Fox Foundation Legacy Donor

chance of survival.

I was asked recently if I had any words to live by. It wasn't an easy question to answer, but I landed on "care, share, give, and receive". At certain points in our lives, we're the ones caring and providing for people. During other times, we learn to receive support. I've been through both stages and am committed to providing hope for people with cancer for years to come. After my family's experiences with cancer, we decided to make a lasting impact on cancer research. I'm proud to tell you I have left a gift in my will to The Terry Fox Foundation – a decision made with my family's knowledge, consultation and support.

I'm not a wealthy person but, at this point in my life, I have an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the things I believe to be important. For me, that's cancer research. This is a cause that requires vision and expertise. The Terry Fox Foundation's focus on collaborative research and precision medicine will benefit Canadians for years to come – something I'm proud to be a part of.

I urge you to think carefully about the causes that are closest to your heart and consider how best to support them. The staff at your favourite charities can help you and your family make a plan that will enable you to have lasting impact.

Thank you.

**John Hopkins**

**Terry Fox Foundation Volunteer, Legacy Donor, and a cancer survivor**